

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.



### SUMATRA IN 1886.

THE island of Sumatra is entirely under Dutch rule, nominally so at all events, though there are large tracts of country where Dutch rule is not yet recognised, or where no attempt has as yet been made to introduce it. This applies particularly to the interior of Atjeh (Acheen), the countries of the Alas, Gayus, and the different tribes of the Battaks.

The island is divided into a number of districts, provinces, or kingdoms, some of which are under direct Dutch rule, whereas others continue to be governed by their native rulers with the assistance of European advisers.

The latest official statements give the following particulars:—

Area,  $8,567\frac{6}{10}$  geographical miles. (This includes the Riouw residency, Banka and Billiton. Though geographically dependencies of Sumatra, these are considered and treated as separate parts in official records.)

Population:—Europeans,	...	...	3,847
Natives of the country,	...	...	2,792,561
Chinese,	...	...	105,823
Arabs,	...	...	2,600
Other Asiatics,	...	...	5,196

These figures must, of course, be regarded as more or less conjectural, as it is only as far as Europeans are concerned that there can be any attempt at accuracy.

The following are the political divisions into which the country has been sub-divided by the Dutch Government:—

1. West Coast of Sumatra, 2,200 geographical square miles under direct Dutch rule. A Governor is at its head with his head-quarters at Padang.

This Government has the following sub-divisions :—

- (a) Padang Lower Counties (Padangsche Benedenlanden). Chief place, Padang.
- (b) Padang Upland Counties (Padangsche Bovenlanden). Chief place, Fort de Kock.
- (c) Tapanuli (Tapien Na Uli). Chief place, Padang Sidempuan.

The Governor of the West Coast is subordinate to the Governor-General in Batavia. The Upland Counties and Tapanuli are administered by Residents, who are subordinate to the Governor of the West Coast.

The Residencies contain smaller districts, with Assistant Residents as Chief Magistrates, under whom there are again lesser sub-divisions under Controllers.

The West Coast is a very rich and thickly populated country. Being, however, very mountainous, and without navigable rivers, and traversed by two chains of high mountains running almost parallel to each other, road-making is difficult, and the country has as yet hardly been able to develop its very rich resources. Vast coal-fields of very superior coal, equal to the best English coal, discovered in 1870, have not yet been opened up, as the question of a railway to the coast still remains unsettled. The coal-fields are estimated to contain about 200 million tons of coal, half of which could be worked by open galleries.

- 2. Residency of Benkoelen, 455 geographical square miles under direct Dutch rule. Chief place, Benkoelen.
- 3. Residency of the Lampong Districts, 47,569 miles, under direct Dutch rule. Chief place, Telok Betong.
- 4. Residency of Palembang, under direct Dutch rule, 2,558 square miles. Chief place, Palembang.

The Resident of Palembang has also to watch the affairs of the Sultanate of Djambi, which continue to be governed by a Sultan with a Dutch Political Agent. The Dutch have taken possession merely of the Coast port—Muara Kompeh—where they keep a small garrison, and levy import and export duties.

The present Sultan, being a nominee of the Dutch Government, is no favourite with his people, who continue to side

with the dethroned Sultan ; the latter lives up-country far away in the interior. The Djambi people are known as great religious fanatics, and troubles are likely to be raised ere long in this part of Sumatra.

5. Residency of East Coast of Sumatra, about 768 square miles. Chief place, Bengkalis.

This Residency consists of a number of native states under their native rulers. The Dutch Government claims direct rule in the island of Bengkalis and in Laboean Batu, a district up the Panei river.

The independent native states in this Residency are :—

Siak Sri Indrapura.

Pelalawan.

Kota Pinang.

Panei and Bila (these latter states dependencies of Siak.)

Kwalu.

Asahan.

Batu Bara.

Tandjong.

Si Pare Pare.

Pagarawan.

Padang } dependencies of Deli.

Bedagei }

Serdang.

Deli.

Langkat.

Tamiang.

Siak, until a few years ago, claimed sovereignty over all these states.

Under treaties with all of them (the last of these only having come into force as late as January, 1886), the Dutch Government now collects import and export duties, has jurisdiction over Europeans and Chinese, controls the land contracts which the native rulers may enter into with Europeans, &c., &c.

The Government disclaims the idea of annexing any of these states, or putting them under direct Dutch rule, and only

a few months ago a native prince was re-installed in Asahan. The Government at that place had, for a number of years, been administered by a Dutch official, the native ruler, for misconduct, having been banished to Java, and his re-installment was evidently made *against* the wishes of the greater part of the Asahan people, who preferred to remain under direct European influence.

6. Atjeh and dependencies, 928 square miles, being the northern part of the island adjoining on the West Coast Singkei, and on the East Coast Tamiang.

Atjeh is under a Governor, who resides in Kota Radja. The country is sub-divided as follows:—

- (a) Atjeh Proper (Groot Atjeh) with 10 sub-districts (Hulubalangs).
- (b) Dependencies, viz. :—
  1. West Coast of Atjeh, consisting of 20 states under native Rajas ;
  2. North Coast of Atjeh, 9 states under native rulers ;
  3. East Coast of Atjeh, 23 native states under Rajas ;
  4. Southern settlements of Atjeh Proper, consisting of 10 states under native rulers.

The interior of Atjeh is entirely unknown. The Dutch troops, since April, 1885, have been concentrated on the northern Coast of Atjeh Proper, in a line which is defended by a number of fortifications. Edi, one of the native states of the East Coast of Atjeh, has also a garrison—the only place out of the line of defence.

What the Dutch Government intends doing towards the final pacification of the country and submission of its obstinate subjects, is difficult to guess.

7. Residency of Riouw and dependencies, about 825 geographical square miles. Chief place, Tandjong Pinang.

There belong to this residency :—

- (a) The Bintang or Riouw group of islands ;
- (b) The Lingga group ;
- (c) The Karimon, Tambilan, Anambas and Natuna

Islands, further on the Eastern Coast of Sumatra.

(g) Indragiri, with Mandah and Reteh.

8. Residency island of Banka with the Leper islands; area about 237 geographical square miles. Chief place, Muntok.

9. Assistant Residency Island of Billiton (I litung) with surrounding islands 154 in number. Chief place, Tandjong Pandan.

Riouw and dependencies, Banka, and Billiton are under direct Dutch rule.

A great deal has been done of late years towards the development of the rich resources of Sumatra, but there still remains a vast field for European capital and enterprise.

F. KEHDING.

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### THE KURAU DISTRICT, PÈRAK.

Kurau was originally a nest of pirates, and no one ventured to live near the *kwála*, the people living at Kampong Tuah, about 70 miles up the river. Many of the Kurau people were themselves pirates, and Colonel LOW, then Government Agent in Province Wellesley, in conjunction with TOH JENUA, Palawan, led, about fifty or sixty years ago, an expedition against Kurau and destroyed a number of piratical boats. Colonel LOW created TOH JENUA Palawan of Kurau in the place of Nakkoda UDDIN, who was a pirate.

No *hasil klamin* was originally paid in Kurau. Kurau formerly extended to Pasir Gedabu and was under Panglima BUKIT GANTANG. Hilir Kurau was itself given to Datoh REJAB under the Panglima. After this the Bendahara came to Kurau and claimed *makan Raja* namely 30 *gantangs* of paddy from each *klamin*, which the Datoh refused to pay. The Bendahara then led an expedition from Pèrak against Kurau and took the Datoh prisoner.